



## BEDBUGS

### What are bedbugs?

Bedbugs, *Cimex lectularius*, are small wingless insects that are up to ¼" long. Bedbugs range in color from white, right after molting, to a reddish brown when they mature. Bedbugs feed on human and animal blood, particularly at night, and can survive without food and water for several months. They have a lifespan ranging from seven months to one year.

### Do bedbugs transmit diseases?

Bedbugs are not known to transmit any diseases. They are considered to be more of a nuisance.

### Where are bedbugs found?

Bedbugs are found worldwide, especially in areas with unsanitary conditions or severe crowding, such as in dormitories, hotels and motels. They hide in cracks, folds and crevices. Bedbugs feed on warm-blooded animals, including humans, particularly at night.

### How can I tell if a residence is infested with bedbugs?

The primary sign of an infestation is residents complaining of bites during the night. Similar to mosquito bites, the bites look red, inflamed and itchy. The bites may become infected. Seek medical attention if infection occurs. Other signs are crawling insects and bloodstains or dark spots from droppings on the mattresses, box springs, walls, floor, bed frames, pillows, sheets and blankets.

### How can a household eliminate bedbugs?

- Clean areas known or suspected of infestation.
- Vacuum cracks and move furniture away from walls to expose hiding spots for bedbugs.
- Wash sheets, and inspect mattresses and pillows.
- Fill in any cracks in the walls or in the frame of the bed.
- Reduce clutter in the house.
- Call a pest control professional. Do not apply any pesticides without professional help because pesticides can be hazardous to people and pets.
- If you live in a dwelling with shared walls (such as a duplex, apartment building, dormitory, or hotel), alert neighbors, landlords, building managers, or the owners if you have bedbug problems. Bedbugs spread to other households by crawling through the walls.
- When discarding infected furniture, mark it as 'Infested with Bedbugs' to prevent spreading.

### For more information on bed bugs, visit the websites below.

- <http://www.entomology.cornell.edu/public/lthacaCampus/ExtOutreach/DiagnosticLab/Factsheets/BedBugs.html>
- <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/bedbugs/>

### For a directory of pest control operators in the State of Delaware, view this website:

<http://delawareontheweb.com/businesses/pest.htm>